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Varieties of childcare policies in Swiss municipalities: Bounded possibilities for gender-equality and social cohesion

Christine Zollinger & Thomas Widmer

1 Introduction

Until the 1990s existing policy instruments in Swiss family policy, such as financial transfers for families with children, supported a traditional male-breadwinner model (Häusermann 2006, Häusermann/Zollinger 2014). In the last decade, Swiss family policy adapted towards 'new' social needs of women to reconcile work and care responsibilities (Bonoli 2005, Taylor-Gooby 2005). Political claims for childcare policies have been included in the political agendas at federal, cantonal and municipal levels.

Since the beginning of the millennium, several municipalities have institutionalized publicly supported childcare services (Stadelmann-Steffen/Oehrli 2013). However, the regulations for non-parental¹ childcare (policy-designs) differ among municipalities and among what is on offer. They differ not only in terms of fee structure but also in terms of regulations concerning the degree of professionalization, i. e. the existence of underlying pedagogical concepts and of regulations concerning the education of care workers. Moreover, some municipalities have set up day-care centers, whereas others provide childcare by (third-party) families (Tagesfamilien).

Recent insights on family policy development in Switzerland from Häusermann and Kübler (2010) have shown that the emergence of a new frame, namely family policy as labor market policy, has led to ambiguous agreements between employers, market-liberal and left-wing parties supporting the institutionalization of childcare services at the federal level. However, it remains unclear whether the variety of childcare services at the municipal

1 Parental childcare includes childcare by other family members such as grandparents.

level – where market-liberal and right-conservative parties dominate many governments – can be explained by the concept of frames as proposed by Häusermann and Kübler (2010).

Moreover, as a typical social investment policy, childcare policies are discussed as having a high potential for more equality in societies (Esping-Andersen et al. 2002, Morel et al. 2012). First, by the activation of female human capital for the labor market they can contribute to gender-equality in employment. Second, by investing in the education of pre-school children these services can contribute to social cohesion between people with different socio-economic backgrounds. Theoretically, the implications of childcare policies on the two dimensions of equality are of particular interest, given that the literature has long agreed that we need a better understanding of the trade-offs between distributive and socio-cultural goals of new social policies (Fraser/Honneth 2003).

Against this backdrop, we are interested in two interrelated questions. First, we investigate why there can be observed such a broad variety of childcare services at the municipal level. Second, we analyze the potential consequences of such a broad variation in childcare provision for both gender-equality and social cohesion. Herewith we join two questions obviously connected but rarely analyzed in a common framework including policy formulation and policy consequences.

Our argument goes as follows: To answer the first research question, we hypothesize that the existence of four frames in the policy space of childcare policy making – a gender-equality, a labor-market, a male-breadwinner frame and a social-integration frame – have an influence on the specific type of childcare service provided in a municipality. To answer the second research question, we hypothesize that the four ideal typical models of childcare services have different potentials for gender-equality and for social cohesion. Hereby we subsume socio-economic dimensions such as income and education under the label social cohesion, with the exception of gender dealt with separately under the heading of gender-equality.

The hypotheses will be investigated by a causal process analysis applied in a comparative qualitative case study design. The focus is on the specific childcare-arrangements institutionalized in two most similar suburban Swiss municipalities in the canton of Berne.

In the chapter, we will first present the theoretical background, before we discuss design and methodology. We will proceed with the presentation of the empirical findings from the case studies, before these findings will be contrasted with the theoretical expectations. In the concluding chapter, we will answer the research questions and discuss our findings, with the article concluding with some implications for the praxis and future research.

2 Theoretical framework and hypotheses

This chapter first presents a theoretical framework explaining the relationship between the dynamics of the political decision-making process and the varieties of childcare services, before a conceptualization of the expected outcomes of those services follows.

2.1 *A theory explaining the varieties of childcare services*

State of the art

The expansion of childcare policies in Switzerland since the mid-1990s, as well as other West-European countries, constitutes a major policy change. It involves an important change both in the underlying conceptions of social risks to be addressed, as well as in the pursued role of women and mothers in society (Fleckenstein 2011: 5445, Häusermann/Kübler 2010: 166). Therefore, the literature has acknowledged that traditional theoretical factors for explaining welfare state development, such as power resources or structural explanations, have to be supplemented with the concept of ideas and frames in order to explain family policy change (Fleckenstein 2011, Häusermann/Kübler 2010, Kübler 2007).

Theoretical framework and hypothesis

Häusermann and Kübler (2010) show that the emergence of a labor-market frame in the field of family policy on the federal level, has led to a new winning coalition between liberal actors and actors from the left supporting the provision of non parental childcare. However, this new winning coalition can be denoted as ‘ambiguous agreement’, because the actors in this coalition are pursuing different policy objectives (Häusermann/Kübler 2010: 184–185, Palier 2005). Liberal actors see in the public provision of day care services a possibility to activate high skilled female human capital into labor market charged with a danger for a gap of high skilled human capital. Left-wing parties at the same time focus on achieving gender-equality in employment with non-parental childcare. The authors argue that “family policy development must be explained by a focus on underlying policy frames (...) that organize thought and behaviour of policy actors who coalesce to produce majorities in decision-making opportunities” (Häusermann/Kübler 2010: 163). *Framing* means here the ability of actors to influence how a social problem has to be interpreted (Benford/Snow 2000: 216). Frames as interpretations of a given political measure clarify its aim (Hall 2010: 171–172). Policy frames emphasize specific aspects of a measure while fading out others. However, in contested

politics distinct frames put forward by different actors compete perpetually with each other (Tarrow 1994: 123).

Hence, the authors have shown, that diverse policy frames in family policy-making are a potential for coalitions between distinct actors. Moreover, we argue that the frame put forward in a decision-making process, has an influence on the design of the resulting childcare policies. Put differently, the varieties of childcare services can be explained by different policy frames in policy-formulation. We hypothesize that actors in decision-making processes make choices about policy designs based on their understandings of the challenges and problems they face (Jenson 2009: 449).

Hypothesis 1: Different frames which are mobilized to build a winning coalition in the decision-making process explain diverse types of childcare services.

Conceptualization of the policy space of childcare policy-making

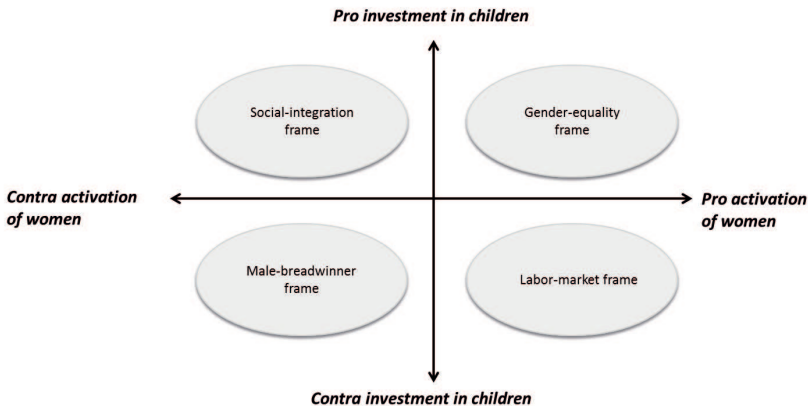
Family policy is undergoing an important shift concerning the abolishment of the logic of a transfer-oriented poverty policy, which was the predominant aim of non parental childcare in a traditional male-breadwinner state, and the rise of a new concept: the social investment concept. In contrast to social transfer policies, which aim to protect families concerned with poverty, the focus of social investment policies is on the redistribution of opportunities (Esping-Andersen et al. 2002, Jenson 2010: 77). The social investment approach follows a preventive logic and is oriented towards the medium- and long-term future. "(...) it should avoid 'spending to insure against misfortune' but be willing to make 'investments' that will increase capabilities" (Jenson 2010: 77). Poverty prevention in the social investment logic implies an investment in 'new' social risks of women and low skilled persons.

We argue that in the context of this fundamental shift, decision-making processes in the field of childcare policy are concerned with a multiplication of frames (Jenson 2010). First, we argue that according to the social investment logic, the policy space of childcare policy-making is multidimensional (Bonoli 1997, Bonoli/Natali 2012). Policies for non-parental childcare concern investments in children and women. Second, according to Jenson (2010: 73–74), social investment as an ambiguous concept provides a common-sense meaning which is open to multiple interpretations and can penetrate and link numerous policy communities.

Hence, non-parental childcare pursues different goals at the same time: Perceived as an investment in women, it can first be framed as a gender-equality policy (Häusermann/Kübler 2010: 173). According its potential for de-familialization, childcare services substitute the female caregiving function in male breadwinner systems (Fraser 1994, Leitner 2003, Orloff 1993). From this perspective, childcare services contribute to gender-equality in

employment, since they allow women to pursue career advancement. Second, the investment in women can be framed as a labor-market policy. By the activation of female human capital it can supply labor markets with high skilled women (Häusermann/Kübler 2010: 173). Moreover, perceived as an investment in children, childcare policies can contribute to the social integration of children from different socio-economic and socio-cultural backgrounds and can support social cohesion (Esping-Andersen et al. 2002). Hence, it can thirdly be framed as a social-integration policy. Moreover, in the realm of a male-breadwinner model, which was dominant in Swiss family policy until the 1990s, non-parental childcare can be seen as a means to prevent poverty of those women concerned with the loss of a male breadwinner (Binder et al. 2003). Consequently, non-parental childcare can fourthly be framed as a male-breadwinner policy. Therefore, the policy space of childcare policy-making is conceptualized as presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Conceptualization of the policy space of childcare policy-making



Hypothetical relations between frames and policy designs

Based on the theoretical argument of Häusermann and Kübler (2010), we argue that these four frames in the space of childcare policy-making create an ideational opportunity structure for new coalitions supporting childcare policies. More concrete, we suppose that depending on the frame mobilized by political actors in a decision-making process, we can expect four different ideal typical models of non-parental childcare services (see Table 1).

Table 1: Hypotheses about frames and types of childcare services

Frames	Services
Gender-equality frame	Universal childcare service
Labor-market frame	Market-liberal childcare service
Poverty-reduction frame	Traditional childcare service
Social-integration frame	Social-integrative childcare service

The *universal model of childcare services* is most probably designed as a public provided day-care center, which is characterized by an income related fee structure. This model allows universal access for families of all socio-economic strata and enables the integration of children with different socio-economic and cultural background, since it is designed to support the activation of women and an investment in children. Regulations concerning the pedagogical education of care workers complement this gender-equality oriented model. A public visible, highly professionalized offer containing an income related fee structure displays a typical example of a universal childcare service.

The *market-liberal model of childcare services* relies mainly on the (neo-) liberal idea of minimal state intervention and a limited investment in social welfare. Similar to the universal model of childcare this model supports the activation of women for the labor market, whereas promoting social cohesion by an investment in the early education of children is not on the agenda. Hence, this model comes without an income related fee structure. Services are provided by private organisations, such as profit-oriented companies or by non-profit associations. Following the market logic of demand and supply, no regulations concerning a pedagogical care-concept neither for pedagogical education standard of the employees exist.

Social cohesion among children from different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds is the main focus of the *model of social-integrative childcare*. By an income related fee structure, it mainly attracts children from the lower income strata and with migration background. This model does not intend to activate women for the labor market and is strongly oriented at traditional gender roles. Services are provided by mothers most preferably in their own households with a low degree of professionalism in terms of pedagogical education standards for care workers.

The *model of traditional childcare* is designed neither to make women available for the labor market nor as an investment in children and is characterized by an offer provided by mothers in their home. Similar to the model of social-integrative childcare, care work is not seen as a profession, which has to be paid for. Hence, the offer does not include a pedagogical concept and is

characterized by a low degree of professionalization in regards to regulations according pedagogical education of care workers. In contrast to the social-integrative model an additional investment in childcare services is excluded and the offer is rarely visible in the public space and targeted to a limited group of single mothers.

2.2 *Conceptualization of the outcomes of childcare policies*

State of the art

Recent studies about the outcomes of childcare policies in Switzerland show two things. First, Schlanser (2011) and Abrassart and Bonoli (2014) show, that day-care centers are used more frequently by families from higher than from lower income strata. Second, Stadelmann-Steffen (2007) argues that for the Swiss cantons there is a correlation between the existence of public day-care centers and women's employment rates. This relation is stronger for women from high and middle-income strata than for women from low-income strata. Hence, public day-care centers affect mostly women with high and middle incomes. However, both studies investigate only the outcome of day-care centers and only on the level of the user. Evidence about the outcomes of other types of services and about the outcomes on the providing side are lacking so far.

Theoretical framework and hypothesis

Ten years after the introduction of the dimension of gender into the welfare state conception (Fraser 1994, Orloff 1993) efforts to include both gender and class into the conceptualization of welfare states appear important, "(...) since most feminist research on welfare states have privileged gender at the expense of class" (Sainsbury 2008: 106). Demands for 'recognition of difference' for example of groups mobilized under the banner of gender have replaced class interest as source of political mobilization (Fraser 1995: 68). Fraser and Honneth (2003) assume though that thinking about contemporary social justice requires both dimensions – redistribution and recognition.

As mentioned earlier, as a social investment policy, childcare policies can potentially contribute to two dimensions of equality. First, as a reconciliation policy, those services can contribute to more gender-equality in employment. Second, as an investment in early education of children they can contribute to the redistribution of opportunities from the better off to the children from families from lower income strata (Esping-Andersen et al. 2002, Jenson 2009: 446, 2010: 61–66).

Based on these arguments we hypothesize that all four different ideal typical models of childcare policy have according to their design a specific potential for gender-equality and for social cohesion (see Table 2):

Hypothesis 2: Diverse types of childcare services have different potentials for gender-equality and for social cohesion.

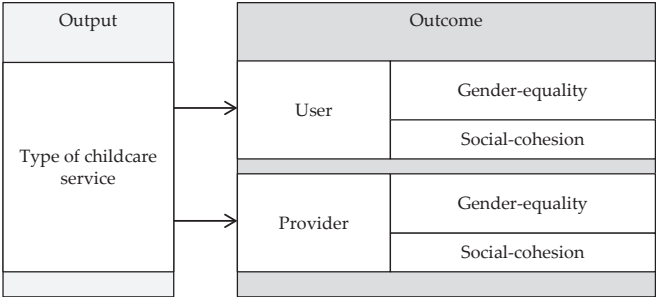
Table 2: Hypothetical potential of the four ideal types of childcare services for gender-equality and social cohesion

Potential for gender-equality	Low	High
Potential for social cohesion		
Low	Traditional childcare	Market-liberal childcare
High	Social-integrative childcare	Universal childcare

2.3 Operationalization of the outcomes

To obtain a comprehensive understanding of the trade-offs of different ideal types of childcare services in terms of gender-equality and social cohesion, we assessed the social outcomes of those services on two levels, namely on the user *and* on the provider side. According to the social investment paradigm, social security should be obtained by commodification of previous labor market outsiders (women). Hence, we argue that only if we analyze both, whether women can be activated for labor market and at the same time whether they find good jobs, we can assess the potential of those policies for gender-equality. This comprehensive view captures the outcomes of childcare services along the two dimensions and between provider and user of those services (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Measurement of the outcome of policy designs on two levels



Outcome on the level of the user

As a social investment policy, which promotes more equality of opportunities the aim of new social spending on the level of the user can be seen as twofold. First it can offer labor market opportunities for parents (mainly mothers). Second, it can redistribute opportunities by investing in the future of children. Consequentially, it is argued here that the ideal types of childcare services can be seen as effective, if they support the integration of women into the labor market (dimension of gender-equality) and if the services are used equally by children from different income classes (dimension of vertical stratification).

Outcome on the level of the provider

To conceptualize the gendering outcomes of new social policies on the level of the provider, we follow the argumentation of Lister (1994). The parallel dimension of de-commodification (Esping-Andersen 1990) proposed by Lister is de-familialization, which she defines as “the degree to which individual adults can uphold a socially acceptable standard of living, independently of family relationships, either through paid work or social security provision” (1994: 37). Consequently, from a provider perspective an ideal type of childcare service will be classified as having a high potential for gender-equality, if an employment in a service provides enough income to maintain an independent household for the care workers (dimension of gender-equality). Moreover, if the employment structure for persons in childcare supply allows for the integration of care-workers from different socio-economic backgrounds, the ideal type of childcare service can be classified as having a high potential for social cohesion.

3 Case selection and methods

The contribution focuses on policies for childcare services in Swiss municipalities. According to the subsidiary principle, municipalities do not only have to implement regulations determined by the cantonal level, but they possess their own scope of action (right to act and right to decide). The municipality holds the main authority to design public policies for day-care services. Hence, a care-arrangement in a Swiss municipality represents a case for the analysis. A care-arrangement consists of all public policies for non parental childcare in a select municipality. The focus lies on public offers for pre-school childcare (0 to four years of age). The comparative qualitative case study design (Yin 2009) involves two suburban municipalities in the canton of Berne. The goal is to work out what conditions can explain the varieties of policy design in two

most similar municipalities (Gerring 2007). In the most-similar case selection strategy a range of independent variables with a potential influence on family policy design are held constant (see Table 3).

Table 3: Criteria and indicators held constant for case selection

Criteria	Indicators
Socio-economic development	Degree of urbanization / suburban municipalities
Cantonal legacies	Degree of decentralization
Political traditions	Municipalities with a majority of liberal and right conservative parties in government
Religious traditions	Protestant Municipalities

Two municipalities in the canton of Berne have been selected: In 2012, 9'700 persons were living in Münchenbuchsee and 3'988 in Pieterlen. During the time of investigation, Pieterlen was governed by a majority of members of the liberal party FDP (3 seats FDP, 1 SVP and SP). Münchenbuchsee was governed by a majority of members of the right conservative party SVP (4 seats SVP, 3 SP, 1 EVP and Greens). The share of families with children below seven years (around 12%) as well as the share of single parents (around 5%) lies in both municipalities around the average of Switzerland (BFS 2000). The unemployment rate in both municipalities was around the Swiss average of 1.8% and the share of people in need of social assistance was 4.8% in Münchenbuchsee and 6.1% in Pieterlen (BFS 2000).

For the case studies we conducted 14 expert interviews with representatives from the government, from the administration, from childcare providers and from political parties (Kvale 2007). Through expert interviews and document analysis we collected data about coalition formation. For the within case analysis the method of process tracing was employed (George/Bennett 2005, Gerring 2007). Outcome data were collected with a written survey. Data about the income-related use of different services and data about the income distribution came from cantonal sources.

4 Findings

The chapter first presents the framework for childcare policies in the canton of Berne. A description of the decision-making process for each case with a

discussion of the frames used in the processes follows. Finally, the outcomes of a given type of childcare service are presented.

4.1 *Framework for childcare policies in the canton of Berne*

Since 2005, the canton of Berne defines the regulations for non-parental childcare offers in a decree (Verordnung über die Angebote zur sozialen Integration, ASIV). This decree contains guidelines concerning quality standards and an income related fee structure, which is applied equally to all municipalities and all kinds of childcare provision. The minimal fee for care per day and kid is 6.60 CHF.

Moreover, by the cantonal system of equalization of financial burdens, the canton pays the municipalities a fixed amount (Normkosten) for each place in an offer for non-parental childcare approved by the municipality and authorized by the canton. Whereas care workers in a day-care center have to have a tertiary education, daily mothers have to attend an 18 hours introduction only. Moreover, daily mothers provide care in their own home, whereas day-care centers are in need of specified rooms that are suitable for children in pre school age (see Table 4).

Table 4: Cantonal regulations for childcare services in the canton of Berne

Regulations	Day-care center	Family day care
Fee structure	According cantonal fee regulation	According cantonal fee regulation
Organisation of provider (public/private)	No regulation	No regulation
Degree of professionalization		
Qualification of care workers	Tertiary education	Mandatory introduction course (18 hours)
Care workers per child	For 12 Children, at least one care-worker with tertiary education	No regulation
Educative quality of the offer (pedagogical concept)	Day-care center has to provide a pedagogical concept	No regulation
Opening hours	At least 9 hours a day, 5 days a week (Monday to Friday) and 240 days a year	No regulation

4.2 Case study Münchenbuchsee

Decision-making process

The local green party in 1998 initiated a popular initiative asking for a public day-care center. However, the issue of the popular initiative was coupled by significant opposition by the municipal council even in the preparatory stage of the ballot (Interview statement). Strong opposition came particularly from the SVP. The people rejected the initiative at the ballot of June 7th 1998.

Two women launched an association for a private day-care center, which opened in autumn 2001 and attracted – although costs are high – an impressive demand with a waiting list three months after project start. In May 14th 2004 the people of Münchenbuchsee approved in a public vote a budget of more than 300'000 CHF for twelve public endowed places in the privately provided day-care center (Interview statement). The cantonal system of equalization of financial burdens covers the expenses for the twelve places, the municipality provides a deficit guarantee of 50'000 CHF.

Patterns of childcare policy-making

A coalition of SP, the Greens and FDP supported the day-care center in 1998 and 2004 (Botschaft Grosser Gemeinderat 1998, 2004). However, these parties supported the public funding of a day-care center with reference to different frames. On the one hand, members of the Green party as well as of the SP supported the bill with reference to a gender-equality frame and – to a lesser degree – with reference to a social-integration frame. Members of the liberal party on the other hand supported the bill with reference to a labor-market frame. The national-conservative party SVP, refused the bill with reference to a male-breadwinner frame very strongly in the year 1998. In the year 2004, at least some members of the SVP joined the coalition of SP, green party and FDP with reference to a labor-market frame.

The initiative for the institutionalization of a day-care center in 1998 was launched by the female president of the Green party, mainly with reference to a gender-equality frame. For her it was important, that the next generation would not face the same reconciliation problems as she did. However, beneath the gender-equality frame, a social-integration frame was present as well. The initiative supporters wanted to create a high quality day-care center.

Interestingly, interview statements show that the social-integration frame was not actively put forward in the decision-making process. Members of the Greens and the SP speculated that such a framing does not convince the SVP as well as the FDP. A majority of the FDP in the parliament supported the initiative during the whole period with reference to a labor-market frame. According to an interview statement, they saw in the integration of high skilled

female human capital into labor markets a possibility to ensure economic growth. Interestingly, the creation of the day-care center was not perceived as an extension of the welfare state. Non-parental childcare activates female human capital for the labor market, what in turn should bring a return of investment for employees and – in the form of taxes – for the municipality. In parliament a majority of the FDP supported the initiative but only under one condition: The day-care center has to be provided privately and the amount by the municipality should be not higher than 30'000 CHF (Botschaft des Grossen Gemeinderates 1998, Debatte Grosser Gemeinderat 2004: 14). Different interview partners have pointed out that a private organization is much cheaper for a municipality: Private associations, in which the organization and administration of the day-care center is made by voluntary workers, bear the financial risk of the provision of a day-care center.

Opposition against the initiative came from the SVP. Different interview statements point out that those actors refused the creation of a day-care center with reference to a male-breadwinner frame. They denied any public demand for such an offer. According to them, it was not the duty of the state to organize and provide non-parental childcare, since this can and has to be provided by the families on their own (Interview statement).

Interestingly, the SVP, even though they refused a day-care center until 2004, did not challenge at any point the existing offer of family day care. According to an interview statement, it was the position of the SVP that offers for non-parental childcare should be provided by housewives, which do that for a low wage in their leisure time. The offer provided by daily mothers was according to them adequate for the existing demand for childcare (Botschaft des Grossen Gemeinderates 1998: 4–5). With reference to a male-breadwinner frame, they refused the need for an expanded offer for childcare until 2004. Then, at least some members of the SVP supported a day-care center with reference to a gender-equality as well as a labor-market frame (Debatte Grosser Gemeinderat 2004: 14–5).

The decision-making process in Münchenbuchsee shows that different actors put forward different frames at different points in time. The multiplication of frames led to a specific care arrangement consisting of a day-care center and an offer of family day care. The FDP supports a day-care center with reference to a labor-market frame, supported only an offer provided privately. Representatives of SP and the Greens supported the day-care center with reference to a gender-equality frame. For the SVP in turn the existing family day care offer was supported because it was seen as the most adequate form for childcare. The existence of an ambiguous agreement between a gender-equality und labor-market frame on the one hand and the existence of a male-breadwinner frame on the other hand led to a care-arrangement

containing a day-care center which can be labelled as universal childcare in combination with a family day care offer, which can be labelled as a traditional childcare service.

Type of childcare service

From 2004, the care-arrangement in Münchenbuchsee comprises a combination of a day-care center on the one hand and family day care on the other. Caused by its high degree of professionalization in terms of education level of care workers and pedagogical concept, the day-care center is categorized as a universal model. Although set up with an income related fee structure whereas it has a bias toward a market-liberal model, since a private actor has to provide it. On the other hand, there exists a privately provided offer by families. This offer is categorized as a traditional child-care service, caused by its low level of professionalization. Because of the income related fee structure it has a bias towards a social integrative model of childcare.

Outcome of the type of childcare service

We will first present our findings on the level of the users of the services, before we proceed with the findings for the outcomes on the level of the provider. Concerning the potential of the childcare services for gender-equality on the level of the user, the data show that both offers are used by around 11% of the family households with children below seven years. Hence, both offers support female employment and have therefore a high potential for gender-equality.

Table 5 presenting the findings on the proportion of children using a service from different income quintiles and shows the potential of the care-arrangement for social cohesion on the level of the users. In both types of childcare children from low-income strata are underrepresented. However, children from low-income strata use the traditional childcare twice as often as the universal childcare. At the same time, children from high-income strata use the universal childcare to a much higher degree (28%) than their fair share of using (4%). Additionally children from high-income strata use universal childcare nearly four times more often than traditional childcare. To summarize, whereas children from families from middle and high-income strata are overrepresented in the universal childcare, children from families from low-income families are overrepresented in the traditional childcare service. Both offers have a limited potential for social cohesion.

Table 5: Outcome on the level of the user of the service: vertical redistribution, Münchenbuchsee (2011)

	Universal childcare		Traditional childcare	
	<i>Fair share of places out of the total amount of places</i>	<i>Actual share of places out of the total amount of places</i>	<i>Fair share of hours out of the total amount of hours</i>	<i>Actual share of hours out of the total amount of hours</i>
Low income families	5.34 (27%)	1.40 (7%)	8293 (27%)	4853 (16%)
Middle income families	13.92 (69%)	13.00 (65%)	21'617 (69%)	24'615 (79%)
High income families	0.74 (4%)	5.60 (28%)	1149 (4%)	1592 (5%)

Source: Gesundheits- und Fürsorgedirektion des Kantons Bern

To assess the potential of the type of childcare service for gender-equality on the level of the provider, we investigated whether the care workers gain enough income to maintain an independent household. Whereas all ten employers in the universal childcare service earn more than 3400 CHF a month (Interview statement), a care worker in the traditional childcare service earns between 320 and 480 Swiss francs per month if one extrapolates to full-time employment. The wage of a woman employed by the association is 6.30 Swiss Francs (CHF) per hour and child and the average degree of employment is 30–40 percent. This is far from enough to maintain an independent household in Switzerland. Working in poverty is defined in Switzerland by a salary of less than 2450 CHF for a full time employment. Consequently, the traditional childcare service is categorized as gendering whereas the universal childcare model is categorized as de-gendering.

To assess the potential for social cohesion of the offers on the level of the provider, we investigated the socio-economic and socio-cultural background of the care workers employed in an offer. As illustrated in Table 6, the share of employees with migration background is very low in both offers. However, since in the universal childcare service only women from middle-income strata are employed it cannot be very helpful in obtaining social cohesion. We see only a very slightly tendency of the traditional childcare service to employ women from lower income strata and with migration background. Hence, both offers have a rather low potential for social cohesion.

Table 6: Outcome on the level of the provider of the service: vertical redistribution, Münchenbuchsee (2011)

Kind of service	Indicator	Findings
Day-care center	Share of employees with migration background? Share of employees from different income strata?	Zero out of ten female employees, only cleaning lady Zero from low income strata*, zero from high income strata
Family day care	Share of employees with migration background? Share of employees from different income strata?	One out of 34 female employees Two from low income strata*, five from high income strata

**Low income strata was defined as an income of less than 41'000 CHF per year, high income strata as an income of more than 100'000 CHF per year.*

4.3 Case study Pieterlen

Decision-making process

At the beginning of the year 2001, the Social Service and the Tutelage and Welfare Authority set a request to the Municipal Council, to establish a project group to establish an offer for childcare. The municipal council, headed by a majority of members of the liberal party FDP and members of the party SVP, doubted the existing demand for childcare, but they accepted to establish a project group in April 2001. It had the task to assess the demand for public childcare and to establish a concept for a non-parental childcare supply. At December 21st 2001 the cantonal Health and Welfare Directorate granted permission for ten places in a day-care center funded by the canton (276'000 CHF). At the municipal assembly of June 4th 2002 the people of Pieterlen supported the establishment of a public day-care center with ten places and the payment of 70'000 CHF as a deficit guarantee by the municipality.

Patterns of childcare policy-making

Members of the liberal party FDP as well as members of the social democrats (SP) put forward the creation of a childcare offer in Pieterlen with reference to a social-integration frame. Actors from the right-wing conservative party SVP refused the demand at least in the beginning with reference to a male-breadwinner frame. However, as it will be shown, the social-integration frame had an influence on the model of childcare, which was chosen, whereas the male-breadwinner frame did not.

The project group, headed by a male municipal councilor from the liberal party FDP, had the task to establish a concept for non-parental childcare.

Different actors reported that not only the other members of the liberal party FDP but as well the conservative actors from the SVP had to be convinced of the idea to institutionalize non-parental childcare supply.

According to interview statements, the reference to a social-integration frame was most important to convince a majority of the municipal council and even more important to convince the people of Pieterlen to support a public day-care center. The leader of the project group played an important role in putting forward the idea of social cohesion and integration as an aim of non-parental childcare. He referred to the integration not only of children from low socio-economic strata but as well of the integration of children with different cultural backgrounds. According to his position, the social integration of children into the society should be achieved with a professional public offer ensuring early education.

Interestingly, this social-integration frame was put forward equally by all interviewees. They stated that Pieterlen was concerned with a high share of unemployed, single mothers and social welfare clients. Their children and children from families with migration backgrounds lead, according to this view, to problems when they entered school in terms of social behavior and language. Persons, whom we interviewed felt challenged by social pressure. Obviously, the best solution to this problem was seen in the establishment of a public day-care center.

Hence, at the municipal assembly a majority of the people voted for the establishment of a public day-care center to take care of children from different socio-economic strata whose parents have to work (Botschaft Gemeindeversammlung Pieterlen 2002). By a highly professionalized offer, pedagogical educated care workers should follow a pedagogical concept in order to enhance social, emotional and cognitive capabilities of the children (Botschaft Gemeinderversammlung Pieterlen 2002).

The data shows that actors from the liberal party FDP put forward the establishment of a day-care center with reference to a labor-market frame. The discussion was more about the economic situation in which women have to work to gain enough income for a family (Interview statement). However, this frame was not center stage in the decision-making process. Astonishingly, the gender-equality frame was never mentioned in the political discussion. Moreover, interview statements indicate that the argument of gender-equality was not helpful for obtaining support.

From the beginning, non-parental childcare was framed according to interview statements as being mainly a solution to a social and an integration problem. Actors from the liberal party FDP supported by representatives from left parties suggested this frame. Although members of the conservative party SVP used in the beginning a male-breadwinner frame, the social-integration

frame succeeded in establishing a majority coalition, which supported the institutionalization of a publicly provided day-care center.

Type of childcare service

In 2012, the care-arrangement in Pieterlen consists of a public provided day-care center. Most importantly, the municipality of Pieterlen regulated that the day-care center has to be organized and provided by the municipality with an income related fee structure. There is common sense among interviewees that the day-care center in Pieterlen follows a high quality pedagogical concept above the cantonal requirements. Therefore, this offer fits to the universal childcare model. However, because of its strong focus on pedagogical education of children and its outstanding pedagogical concept it has a bias toward a social-integration model of childcare.

Outcome of the type of childcare service

We will first present our findings on the level of the users of the services, before we proceed with the findings for the outcomes on the level of the provider. Concerning the potential of the type of childcare for gender-equality on the level of the user, the data show that the offer is used by 27.2% of the family households with children below seven years. Hence, female employment is supported to a high degree and it can thus be assessed as having a high potential for gender-equality. Table 7 presents the findings for the proportion of children from different income quintiles (social cohesion) using the service. The data show that children from all income strata use the universal childcare service equally.

Table 7: Outcome on the level of the user of the service: vertical redistribution, Pieterlen (2011)

	Day-care center	
	<i>Fair share of places out of the total amount of places</i>	<i>Actual share of places out of the total amount of places</i>
Low income families	8.16 (41%)	8.50 (43%)
Middle income families	11.26 (56%)	10.70 (53%)
High income families	0.58 (3%)	0.80 (4%)

Source: Health and Social Welfare Directorate, Canton of Berne

We now turn to the findings on the provider side. According to interview statements all six employees with tertiary education have an annual wage of

more than 41'000 CHF. They have on average a workload of 73% and a salary of at least 2500 CHF supporting an independent household. As a consequence, the universal childcare service is categorized as de-gendering.

To assess the potential of the offer for social cohesion on the provider side, we investigated the socio-economic and socio-cultural background of the care workers. As it is shown in Table 8, women from low income strata and women with migration background are employed in the universal childcare service. Hence, we observe a potential for social cohesion.

Table 8: Outcome on the level of the provider of the service: vertical redistribution, Pieterlen (2011)

Kind of service	Indicator	Findings
Day-care center	Share of employees with migration background? Share of employees from different income strata?	Two out of six employees One from low income strata, zero from high income strata

5 Comparison

5.1 Explanations for distinct childcare services

As findings indicate, different frames used in the process of policy-formulation to build a winning coalition shape the variety of resulting childcare services. First, we found that two very similar municipalities, Münchenbuchsee and Pieterlen, have established different types of childcare services (see Table 9). Second, the data has shown that the frames shaping the decision-making-processes had consequences for the chosen type of childcare service.

Table 9: Comparison between frames and type of childcare service in the two cases

	Frame	Type of childcare service
Münchenbuchsee	Gender-equality and labor-market frame Strong male-breadwinner frame	Universal childcare with tendence towards a market-liberal model
		Traditional childcare
Pieterlen	Social-integration frame	Universal childcare with tendence towards a social-integrative model

In Münchenbuchsee we found a majority coalition supporting a universal childcare model, which formed around a gender-equality and a labor-market frame. At the same time, the existence of a strong male-breadwinner frame enhanced the development of a traditional childcare service, however with an income related fee structure. Both developments are expected by the hypothesis. In Pieterlen, we found that a strong social-integration frame led to the establishment of a universal childcare service. This development contradicts the postulated hypothesis.

Hence, our theoretical expected relationship between a certain frame and an ideal typical model of a childcare service was only partially supported by the data. This can be caused by the fact, that empirically there does not exist one ideal typical model of childcare. As it has been shown by our data, a universal childcare model can either have a bias toward a social-integrative model or a market-liberal model of childcare. In our cases, the income related fee structure was given by cantonal regulations. Hence, even though a strong male-breadwinner frame existed in Münchenbuchsee, it did not lead to an ideal typical form of a traditional childcare service.

Our findings supported the hypothesis that winning coalitions form around different types of childcare services that allow specific combinations of different childcare policy frames. In order to build majority coalitions for certain types of childcare services, actors made use of different frames in the process of policy-formulation.

5.2 Outcomes of different types of childcare services

Different types of childcare services have different potentials for gender-equality and social cohesion. All services had a high potential for the activation of women for labor markets and hence, a high potential for gender-equality on the user side. The services provided non-parental childcare from 22% (Münchenbuchsee) up to 27% (Pieterlen) of all families with children below seven years. However, the findings have shown that different types of childcare services have different potentials for gender-equality on the provision side. Whereas employees in a universal childcare offer earn enough to maintain an independent household, the wage of care workers in a traditional childcare offer is too low to support an independent household.

Interestingly, the universal childcare model present in both cases did not had the same potential for social cohesion in both municipalities. Whereas this potential was high in the case of Pieterlen, the potential was low in Münchenbuchsee. We found that the co-existence of a universal childcare service and a traditional childcare service led to social segregation in the use of those services. Whereas the universal childcare service was mainly used by middle and

high-income strata, the traditional childcare service was more often used by low-income families. Most interestingly this is despite families having to pay the exact same amount for care in both offers. According to interview statements, the reason for these different patterns in the use of those services lies in the higher timely flexibility of family day care.

To summarize, our findings indicate the existence of trade-offs not only between gender-equality and social cohesion but as well between the outcomes of the two dimensions on different levels. For example, concerning gender-equality, we found that a service can enhance female labor market inclusion on the level of the user, but at the same time provide precarious working conditions for care workers on the provider side. A service can enhance gender equality both on the level of user and provider, as the case for the universal childcare service in Münchenbuchsee, but at the same time be problematic in terms of social cohesion at the level of the user.

6 Conclusion

Since the beginning of the millennium, Swiss municipalities have established new social policies for childcare that ease conflicts between paid work and family life. However, the design of public policies for non-parental childcare varies not only in terms of the organization of its provision, but also in regards to quality standards. Childcare services, as a typical example of a social investment policy, can contribute to more equality in the society. However, the potential of those policies for gender equality and social cohesion is all but clear.

Against this backdrop, the interest of our study was twofold. First, we investigated how the variety of childcare services in Swiss municipalities can be explained. Second, we examined what potential the diverse types of childcare services have for gender-equality and social cohesion.

The main results showed that the two municipalities under investigation have established different types of childcare services. Münchenbuchsee has institutionalized a care-arrangement consisting of a combination of a traditional and a universal childcare service. Pieterlen has institutionalized a universal childcare service only. Our data indicates that different policy frames in the process of policy-formulation shape partly the resulting variety of childcare services. As proposed by Häusermann and Kübler (2010), framing effects emerged as important variables explaining different outputs of decision-making processes. However, cantonal regulations play an important role in how those frames translate into a specific type of childcare. Thus, future research

should carefully retrace the process of coalition formation, and flesh out how institutions influence the relationship between frames and output.

To obtain a comprehensive understanding of the trade-offs between different types of childcare services in terms of gender-equality and social cohesion, we assessed the social outcomes on two levels, namely on the user *and* on the provider side. Most surprisingly, the data show that parents from different income classes use different types of childcare services differently, although the costs are similar for both offers due to public subsidies. Whereas parents from low-income classes use the traditional childcare service provided by families more frequently, parents with middle and high income use universal childcare services supplied by day-care centers more frequently. These offers differ sharply in their degree of professionalization in terms of requirements for pedagogical conception and educational standard for care workers. Hence, parents from low-income classes can barely profit from high quality childcare services provided by day-care centers. They use the offer with lower quality standards provided by families, which is more flexible in terms of opening hours. Moreover, the results show that the offer of childcare services supplied by families produces precarious, low-paid jobs, mostly for women. Thus, on the provider side childcare policies can have a *social rebound effect* for these female employees. On the other hand, we have shown that the offers are used by an amount of around 25% of all families with children below seven years in both municipalities and can thus contribute to gender-equality on the level of the user of those services.

In accordance with other authors we found that the way in which states respond to the childcare gaps in post-industrial societies is highly relevant for gender-equality and for social cohesion (Jenson/Sineau 2003, Morel 2007). Hence, it is argued that in the future the design of policy measures for gender-equality, namely those for enhancing the reconciliation of care and work, should be carefully crafted. Otherwise, there is a danger, that the adaptation of the welfare state to 'new' social demands of women produces suboptimal outcomes in terms of social cohesion and even gender-equality. Therefore, these effects have to be analyzed more broadly based on additional cases in varying contexts.

For the current debate on promoting a higher degree of labor-market integration of shigh-skilled women it is important to recognize the following two points: First, the social-liberal winning coalition, nowadays often responsible for an extension of non-parental childcare, mostly favors childcare policy designs oriented towards a privileged clientele. Second, depending on specific design, childcare provision can reduce social cohesion and gender-equality by providing high quality services for high-income groups and precarious employments for women.

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